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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0019
RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 0001
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 0071
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 0014
RUEHJL/AMEMBASSY BANJUL 0001
RUEHNN/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 0001
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0042

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 001247

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI/SOMALIA - CONTRIBUTION TO AMISOM

REF: 09 STATE 110709

CLASSIFIED BY: James Swan, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(A), (B), (D)

1.(C) Summary: Djiboutian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Youssouf confirmed Djibouti's commitment to contribute a battalion (400-450) to AMISOM perhaps in early 2010, and to send a small number of Somali interpreters sooner. He said an AU delegation would visit Djibouti next week to discuss modalities for the Djiboutian contribution. End summary.

12. (C) In an Oct. 29 meeting with Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Ambassador made ref demarche urging Djibouti to fulfill its commitment to contribute forces to AMISOM. Ambassador conveyed USG willingness to support this deployment, noting that the ACOTA Training Strategy Conference (TSC) is tentatively scheduled for Dec. 7-10 in Djibouti and that the USG would also consider providing training and equipment for the troops. Also attending the Oct. 29 meeting were MFA Director of Bilateral Relations Mohamed Ali Hassan, visiting USAU PermRep Michael Battle and Addis Ababa Charge Roger Meece, and DCM Wong.

13. (C) Youssouf confirmed Djibouti's commitment to send a battalion (est. 400-450 personnel) to AMISOM. Citing Djibouti's national interest in promoting security in neighboring Somalia, he said Djibouti was "committed to preventing al-Shabaab from taking over Mogadishu." As for next steps, he said that an AU delegation would visit Djibouti from Addis Ababa next week to "discuss modalities" and review in detail the requirements for the troops sought from Djibouti. Youssouf explained that the GODJ could not focus on the AMISOM deployment until after the East Africa Standby Force (EASBRIG) completes its Field Training Exercise (FTX) in Djibouti November 21-25. Once detailed plans are developed, Youssouf said he expected training of the force to take at least "one-to-two months" and so projected deployment to Mogadishu no sooner than early 2010. He also underscored the need for donor assistance to provide equipment for the forces to be deployed, noting the heavy burden borne by Djiboutian forces due to the continued stand-off with Eritrea.

14. (C) Prior to deploying the battalion, Djibouti will also provide a small number of interpreters as part of an "observation team" to support AMISOM. As this does not involve a large mobilization, these interpreters can be sent in the coming days, the Minister said, and do not need to wait until after the FTX. While he did

not provide a date for their departure, he said specific Djiboutian officers had been identified 2-3 weeks ago for this mission.

15. (C) Comment: Djibouti remains committed to the AMISOM deployment, but has not begun operational planning. The scheduled ACOTA TSC with Djibouti will be an excellent opportunity to help the GODJ refine its planning and requirements for the deployment. It would be efficient if USG personnel who will be responsible for procuring USG-funded equipment for the contingent could also travel to Djibouti to engage host-country contacts at that conference.
SWAN